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County gets grant to widen busy road

A state board earmarks \$3.5 million for 20th Street SE near Lake Stevens.

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Herald Writer

The money is now in place to fix one of the most-congested sections of road in unincorporated Snohomish County.

The state Transportation Improvement Board announced Monday that Snohomish County will receive \$3.5 million in 2005 to help it widen 20th Street SE just outside of Lake Stevens.

Stanwood also will get \$114,800 for rebuilding a Highway 532 intersection and Everett gets \$75,735 for a sidewalk project on 100th Street SW.

Twentieth Street begins at the east end of the U.S. 2 trestle, cutting a path uphill toward Highway 9. It's so crowded with traffic that the county halted new development until last December, when it announced plans to widen the road.

"This is one of the county's top priorities," said Elizabeth Sjostrom, funding coordinator for Snohomish County. "This was exactly what we needed to make this project go."

When it's finished, the \$13.8 million project will see 20th Street widened to five lanes from 91st Avenue SE to 99th Avenue SE, a section of road that includes the busy Highway 9 intersection. Snohomish County will pay for the rest of the project from its general fund.

Construction is scheduled to start in 2008 and finish in 2009, said Max Phan, the county's project manager. He said a similar \$5 million to \$6 million widening project is planned for the section of 20th Street from 99th Avenue W. to Lake Stevens Road. The state granted the county \$2 million for that project in 2004. There are plans but no funding to widen 20th Street from 91st Avenue SE to the trestle.

Stanwood's \$114,800 will go toward the \$876,300 cost of rebuilding the Highway 532 intersection with 72nd Avenue. In Everett, the \$75,735 grant will help pay the \$126,225 cost of building sidewalks on 100th Street SW from Holly Drive to 12th Avenue W.

The Transportation Improvement Board issued 64 grants for 2005, amounting to \$70 million from gas tax collections. Snohomish County has received more grant money than any other county since 2000, said Stevan Gorcester, the agency's director.

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